

Erkenek

Erkenek (**Erkecel**, **Erkecey**, **Ernek**, **İrkenek**, **İrkeyel**) is a character of Turkish / Turkic folklore. Erkenek is no bigger than a thumb. His adventures mostly include tangling with giants. Erkenek is a traditional folk character. In Azerbaijan folklore besides his name is *Cırtan*.^[1] In Anatolia also known as **Parmak Çocuk** (Thumb Child).

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The tales

The tales belongs to the swallow cycle. Erkenek is swallowed by a cow or a giant but he is a mighty, although tiny, warrior and conqueror of giants and robbers. He has adventures that again involve swallowing (by a miller), being imprisoned in a mousetrap and finally dying from the poisonous breath of a spider. Erkenek cheats at games with other boys, and, because of his many tricks, the boys will not associate with him.

In other story, a poor childless peasant couple wishes for a child "no matter how small" aloud. Seven months later the wife has a small child "no longer than a thumb" which they call "Erkenek" and who becomes a "wise and nimble creature." Erkenek as he grows wishes to help his father in the chores.

Etymology

In Mongolian language **Erhi** or **Erki**^[2] (Old Mongol: **Erekey**) and in Turkish **Ernek** (Old Turkic: **Erjek**)^[3] means Thumb.

See also

- Thumbling
- Tom Thumb

References

- Спектакль-"Джыртдан"^[1] (<http://www.citylife.az/content.php?past=1&et=2&pt=&es=8&ps=&place=&article=&n=1&nid=129>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130921061202/http://www.citylife.az/content.php?past=1&et=2&pt=&es=8&ps=&place=&article=&n=1&nid=129>) 2013-09-21 at the Wayback Machine(in Russian)

2. Turkish Mythological Dictionary (Türk Söylence Sözlüğü), Deniz Karakurt
3. On the Words of Uighur Kiçig Ernek, Karakhanid Çıçalak, Engin Çetin, Turkish Studies - International Periodical For The Languages [2] (<http://www.turkishstudies.net/DergiPdfDetay.aspx?ID=3866>)

External links

- Азербайджанская сказка: Как Джиртдан увел детей от страшного дива (http://kottimofey.narod.ru/tales/azerbaijan_jirdan.html) (in Russian)
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